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FAA Modernization Needed To Reduce Delays and Improve Safety

(WASHINGTON, DC) - congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3), member of the Aviation Subcommittee, voted today in favor of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2009 providing consumer protections for airline passengers, modernizing infrastructure, and taking critical steps to improve safety for airline passengers. H.R. 915 passed 277-136

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and now moves to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

"While we work to get our economy back on track it is time the United States modernize an aging Air Traffic Control system and strengthen airport infrastructure to reduce delays and improve safety," said Congressman Carnahan. **"It is essential passengers are able to board a plane to travel on business or leisure without second-guessing themselves."**

The legislation provides for the robust capital funding required to modernize an aging Air Traffic Control system, as well as to stabilize and strengthen the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. It includes \$16.2 billion for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) critical to Lambert Airport economic development and other area airports, and \$39.3 billion for FAA Operations.

It also provides \$13.4 billion for air traffic control modernization, including for accelerating the implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation System, enabling FAA to repair and replace existing facilities and equipment, and implementing high-priority safety-related systems.

"This legislation would require airlines and airports to develop plans to take care of

passengers involved in long flight and tarmac delays, including plans for deplaning," said Carnahan.

"Being stuck in a plane for hours on end without an explanation will be a thing of the past."

This bill requires airlines and airports to have emergency contingency plans to take care of passengers who are involved in long onboard tarmac delays, including plans on deplaning after a lengthy delay. The Department of Transportation (DOT) can fine those who fail to develop or comply with these plans.

To pay for the modernization of air traffic control the bill includes an increase in the general aviation jet fuel tax rate from 21.8 cents per gallon to 35.9 cents per gallon; and increases the aviation gas tax rate from 19.3 cents per gallon to 24.1 cents per gallon. The increases will be dedicated to air traffic control modernization, which will strictly be overseen by audits and reports to reduce cost overruns and delays in the air traffic control modernization program.

Congressman Carnahan is a member of the Aviation Subcommittee. In the 110th Congress, the House passed a similar FAA reauthorization bill (H.R. 2881) by a vote of 267-151, on September 20, 2007. However, the Senate did not complete action on its version (S. 1300).

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